

Information Item

Educational Policy and Programs Committee

Update on the Commission's Student Information and Accountability System

This agenda item outlines the progress made to date by staff to implement Assembly Bill 1570 which authorizes the Commission to augment its existing student information database with a unique student identifier for each student record. This additional data element will enable the Commission to monitor longitudinally the progress and success of students as they enroll and complete their postsecondary education studies within California. Staff will report on:

- ♦ Successful completion of the State-required Feasibility Study Report;
- ♦ Ensuring confidentiality, privacy, and security;
- ♦ Obtaining the unique student identifier from colleges and universities and working with K-12 systems; and
- ♦ Establishing an advisory committee.

Presenter: Martin Miller.



Update on the Commission's Student Information and Accountability System

Introduction Assembly Bill 1570 (Chapter 916, 1999), authored by former Assembly Speaker Villaraigosa and Romero, was signed into law by Governor Gray Davis on October 9, 1999. The bill authorized the California Postsecondary Education Commission to augment its existing student information database with a unique student identifier for each student record (see Display 1). The Commission has made significant progress in making arrangements with California public colleges and universities to obtain the data called for in law.

Display 1 Data Elements Included in the Current Student Record

Branch Campus	High School of Origin (for undergraduates)
Citizenship Status	Institution
Credit Load	Institutional Category
Enrollment Status	Institutional Program
Ethnic Status	Permanent Residence
Fee Status	Student Level
Full-Time/Part-Time Status	Student Program
Gender	Student's Year of Birth

While the current database allows the Commission to create important and useful reports (see Display 2) such as *Performance Indicators* and *Student Profiles* and on topics such as freshman enrollment, the additional data element will enable the Commission to monitor longitudinally the progress and success of students as they enroll and complete their postsecondary education studies within California. In turn, this new capability will facilitate production of additional reports and analysis by the Commission that will assist policymakers when addressing important issues such student transfer.

Display 2 Reports Generated from the Current Student Record

- ◆ Student Profiles
 - ◆ College-Going Rates
 - ◆ Community College Transfers to California Public Universities
 - ◆ First-Time Freshmen in California Colleges and Universities
-

The Commission is also working actively with its colleagues in K-12 education to ensure the compatibility of the Commission's student information systems with K-12's developing California Student Information System (CSIS) such that the State will be able to determine the educational progress and success of students from kindergarten through college.

**Purpose of the
new system**

The purpose of the postsecondary education student information system is to monitor longitudinally the movement of students into, between, and through the public segments of higher education in California. With unique identifiers available for students in postsecondary institutions, the Commission will be able to better understand and report on students' choice of institution, time to degree, drop-out and stop-out patterns, transfer patterns, and concurrent enrollment. Independent institutions will be requested to participate in the system.

The information reported from the enhanced system would provide information necessary for policy makers to determine how well public colleges and universities are responding to state policy priorities and accountability goals.

**Status of
implementation**

Since enactment of Assembly Bill 1570, the Commission staff has been active in the preparations necessary to collect the unique student identifier associated with each student record. This has included complying with a number of official State requirements concerning development of additional technology, retaining the personnel and consultative resources necessary to implement the new system, and made significant progress towards receiving the new unique identifier from the State's public higher education institutions.

In early October 2000, the Commission's Executive Director Warren Fox wrote the chief executive officers of each of California's educational systems. He requested that, consistent with the provisions of Assembly Bill 1570 and having a security system in place, that each system supply the Commission with the Social Security Number associated with each student record beginning with fall 1994 as well as for all student records in each subsequent year.

As a result, both the State University and California Community Colleges have agreed to provide these data. However, citing legal and privacy concerns, the University of California agreed orally to provide data for the two previous years and each subsequent year. The Commission anticipates receipt of these data from each California public higher education system in early spring 2001.

To date, the Commission staff has:

- ◆ Submitted a Feasibility Study Report to the Department of Information Technology and the Department of Finance;

- ◆ Received approval of that study and fulfilled numerous and varied State administrative requirements associated with changes in data and technological initiatives;
- ◆ Retained an external consultant to ensure that all data submitted to the Commission will be secure and that no personally identifiable information will be released externally;
- ◆ Developed plans to ensure that the Commission is in full compliance with all federal and State requirements relating to the confidentiality and privacy of all data maintained by the Commission;
- ◆ Worked to finalize the State required "Security Plan" for its information system and will be submitting that plan for approval to the State's Department of Information Technology within the next few weeks;
- ◆ Hired additional staff necessary to provide program and administrative support; and
- ◆ Requested that the University of California, California State University and the California Community Colleges provide the unique student identifier for each student record dating back to 1994.

**Advisory
committee**

The Commission staff is in the process of convening an intersegmental advisory committee to cooperatively achieve the processing, analysis, and reporting of information from the Commission's longitudinal student information system. The advisory committee will be composed of members from each of the three public postsecondary education systems, the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU), the California Department of Education, and the Bureau of Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education. The first meeting is slated for the end of February 2001.

To date, CPEC has received responses from each public university and college system and the California Department of Education regarding their appointees to the advisory committee.

Over the next few months, the Commission staff, in conjunction with the advisory committee, will also prepare an outline and timeline for the reports produced as a result of the analysis that will be possible with the addition of the unique student identifier on each student record. It is likely that the first of these reports will focus on student transfer, given the issue's current significance and attention. Additionally, staff will be exploring the options that exist for electronically sharing its student information database with the State's various educational systems.
